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REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Claims 1-99 have been canceled. Claims 100-127 are added. No new matter has been added. Claims 100-127 are pending.

The previous claims 3, 6-17, 22-26, 30, and 39-57 were rejected in the Office Action dated January 18, 2006. The Office Action included separate rejections for anticipation by or, in the alternative, for obviousness over Toyosawa et al. (US 5716997), Shimizu et al. (US 4911974), Giez et al. (US 5366999), Imashiro et al. (US 5413853), and von Bonin (US 4992481). The Office Action also included a rejection of the claims for obviousness over Toyosawa et al. in view of von Bonin et al. These rejections are rendered moot as claims 1-57 are all canceled. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejections.

With regard to added claims 100-127, Applicants respectfully submit the following remarks in support of patentability. Claim 100 is an eraser that requires, among other features, that the skeleton portion of a skeleton structure to be made from an organic polymer selected from the group of melamine-based resin, epoxy-based resin, urethane-resin, and phenol-based resin. The organic polymer of the skeleton portion has an average thickness from 1 μm to 100 μm . The void portion of the skeleton structure has an average pore size of 20 μm to 3 mm, where the void portion is filled with the elastic material. Claim 103 further requires that the skeleton portion has an average thickness of 10 μm to 50 μm and that the void portion has an average pore size of 10 μm to 3 mm. Claim 101 requires that the filling rate of the elastic material is less than 100% with respect to the total volume of void portion of the skeleton structure, and claim 102 further requires that the same filling rate is set in the range of 60% to 80%. Claim 124 is an electric-eraser that includes the features of claim 100.

The cited references do not disclose or suggest at least the features of claims 100, 101-103, and 124 mentioned above. For example, Toyosawa et al. merely discloses a thickness for its cells to be 0.5 to 5 microns and having a percentage value for porosity. However, Toyosawa et al. does not satisfy the combination of average thickness range and average pore size range required by claims 100 and 103. That is, Toyosawa et al. does not disclose or suggest the required thickness for a skeleton portion and the required

pore size for a void portion of claim 100, namely that average thickness is 1 μm to 100 μm and the average pore size is 20 μm to 3mm. Of course, the cited reference does not disclose or suggest claim 103, which recites a more specified average thickness of 10 μm to 50 μm and an average pore size of 10 μm to 3 μm .

Furthermore, Toyosawa et al. does not disclose or suggest claim 101, which requires a filling rate of an elastic material to be set in the range of less than 100% with respect to the entire volume of the void portion in the porous structural material. Of course, the reference also does not disclose or suggest claim 102, where the filling rate is set in the range from 60% to 80%. The rejection contended that Toyosawa et al. does not disclose the filling rate of the claimed range, but discloses the weight ratio of copolymer and low weight molecular material is up to 30% and within the range of the claimed invention. The rejection further contends that the filling rate would be inherently present in Toyosawa et al., because the reference uses the same technique for filling the functional material. Applicants respectfully disagree, and contend that the reference does not disclose or suggest the filling rate feature of claims 101-102, and that there is nothing in Toyosawa et al. that could be considered inherent to the filling feature of claims 101-102. In fact, Toyosawa et al. provides the definition that $X/X+Y$, where the amount of copolymer is defined as X and the low weight molecular material is defined as Y, to give a weight ratio of up to 30%. That is, Toyosawa et al. allows both the copolymer and low molecular weight materials to vary. However, in claims 101-102, it is the filling rate of the elastic material that may change with respect to the entire volume of the void portion, which does not change. Thus, Toyosawa does not disclose or suggest the claimed features.

Moreover, the claimed features can provide an eraser with improved structure and performance. For example, the wear rate and the rate of erasure can be improved as a result of the filling rate recited by the claims. (See for example page 14-15.) An eraser is provided that can erase more smoothly and can leave scraps on paper or the surface of the eraser and collected in more continuous form, rather than being scattered all over, or adhering to the eraser. (See for example Table 1 and pages 38-39.) Furthermore, an eraser is provided with a higher surface hardness while also having a lower sticking strength to further improve the erasing and eraser scrap collecting properties. (See for

example Figure 7 and Table 2.) However, as Toyosawa et al. does not disclose or suggest the features claimed, there is no reasonable suggestion that the reference would arrive at the claims or the benefits enjoyed therefrom.

With respect to Shimizu et al., Giez et al., Imashiro et al., and von Bonin, these references also fail to disclose or suggest the features required by at least claims 100, 101-103, and 124. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 100-127 are patentable over the references cited.

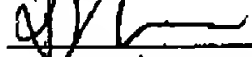
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe that the pending claims are in a condition for allowance. Favorable consideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. If any questions arise regarding this communication, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative listed below.



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Respectfully submitted,

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